

BRAC IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY – July 14, 2009

- John Carman called the Committee to order at 7:35 p.m.
- Phil Alperson provided the following updates:
 - **The Transportation Project Matrix** on the web site and has been updated through June 18, 2009. It tracks all the projects that are under way or have been proposed relating to Bethesda BRAC infrastructure:
http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/transpo_project_matrix-061809.pdf
 - **The first meeting of MDOT's Bethesda BRAC Coordinating Committee was July 7.** Technical staff from all the above agencies, plus MTA (rail and bus), NNMC and NIH were all literally at the table and able to share views and concerns on projects and planning. These agencies continually communicate, but rarely do we have everybody in the same place at the same time. (Sean Massey or Andy Scott can give more details).
 - **Funding for Intersections project:** Thanks to Congressman Van Hollen, the House THUD Approps Subcommittee has approved a \$3.25 earmark for the MD355 BRAC projects. This still requires full Committee, House, Senate and Conference action but, if approved, will be the third consecutive year this project has received a Congressional earmark. Earmarks for FY08 and 09 totaled about \$5 million.
 - **Metro entrance/pedestrian access project:**
 - **WMATA expects to complete its Final Report** on the Metro entrance/pedestrian access evaluation by the end of this month. This report is crucial to supporting requests for federal funding, such as the Defense Access Road (DAR) program and economic stimulus grants.
 - **Defense Access Road funding.** At the June meeting we announced that the Defense Dept. had included a \$20 million "placeholder" in its FY2011 budget for the Metro entrance/pedestrian access project. This is NOT "money in the bank" but it reflects the obvious interest of the Obama Administration and the Department of Defense for this project.

In a recent related development, with many thanks to Congressman Van Hollen, last month the House of Representatives passed the FY2010 Defense Authorization bill that includes language expressing Congressional support for Defense Access Road (DAR) certification for multi-modal approaches for the Bethesda BRAC project. In other words, the bill says that DAR funding would be appropriate for Metro entrances,

bus and other transit enhancements as well as highway and intersecting improvements to address BRAC-related traffic in Bethesda.

http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/dar_cvh-fy10defaultlanguage-062509.pdf

- **ARRA (Economic Stimulus) funding.** MDOT is compiling a list of projects throughout the state that might be part of a state-wide submission for an ARRA TIGER grants. Montgomery County is busily preparing its request for the state to include the Metro entrance pedestrian access project as part of that submission. At this point it is not known whether this project will be on the state's list, so the County is preparing a separate application, if it becomes necessary.

In addition, the Council of Governments (COG) is assembling a regional ARRA TIGER grant application focused on regional transit projects. MC-DOT has submitted the Metro entrance pedestrian access project for inclusion in this package.

- **Bike and Pedestrian Paths:** At the June meeting, we reported that the DOD Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) had agreed to the County's request for a \$750,000 study grant towards the improvement of pedestrian and bike paths in the area of NNMC. Because this grant will reimburse the County for expenditures it makes on this project, it became necessary for the County Council to add funds to its budget so MC-DOT can undertake this project.

We can now report that the County Executive and MC-DOT have submitted a formal request to the County Council for a supplemental appropriation so that MC-DOT can conduct that study, and then be reimbursed by DOD under the grant. We anticipate Council approval of this request by the end of this month. We can anticipate these subsequent actions, according to Edgar Gonzalez of MC-DOT:

1. Planning and Preliminary Engineering will then be initiated in **August of 2009** using a combination of in-house staff and consultants that we already have on-board.
2. All our work under the Grant should be completed by the spring of 2010.
3. We are also preparing a regular capital project, which will be in a way an amendment to the one we expect to get approved by the Council this coming month. That project will be for the **actual construction** and implementation of the effort that will be started by the Grant monies. That is the project (construction) that can not start until July, 2010. But the Grant money will be totally used and the preliminary engineering work completed by the spring of 2010.

- Map of area to be studied:
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/bikeways-dotfinalmap-oearquest-091608.pdf>
- **On June 30, the County Council held a BRAC briefing.** Speakers included John Carman on behalf of the BIC, representatives from MC-DOT, MDOT, SHA, WMATA, and Park & Planning, and myself. The briefing provided updates on transportation projects and the need for long-range planning.
 - Several Council Members urged the Committee to identify any future needs they may foresee. John Carman composed a rough draft of a letter to the County Executive for the BIC's consideration.
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/bic-lettoglegett-councilactionrequested-draft-071409.doc.pdf>
 - Councilmember Floreen, who chairs the Transportation Committee, is planning a follow-up meeting in September.
- **August Committee Meeting:** Phil asked whether the August meeting should be cancelled due to summer schedule conflicts. The Committee agreed to cancel the August meeting.
- **Councilmember Roger Berliner informed the Committee about a letter he sent the day before to Governor O'Malley, which urged him to work with state and local officials to develop a statewide initiative for Sustainable Transportation Corridors, such as MD 355.**
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/berlinertoomalley-sustainabletranspocorridor-071309.pdf>

He noted that the Committee needs planning guidance in its effort to address short and long term solutions to growth in the region, BRAC and otherwise, within the context of the broader vision of mobility and livability. He said that the Park and Planning Commission must provide such guidance and has urged Chairman Hanson to move forward with such a plan. He also noted that local partners need to work together to make planning implementation work effectively. As an example, he cited NIH's past cooperation in ceding easements for pedestrian mobility and urged NIH to consider similar cooperation to facilitate the implementation of a Bus Rapid Transitway along MD 355. Regarding BRAC he believes that area stakeholders are more interested in achieving the best long-term solutions, if they can be sure they are being implemented, rather than meeting the September 2011 BRAC deadline with less effective solutions that apply only to the short term.

- **Neighborhood Coalition Update:** Ilaya Hopkins praised Councilmember Berliner's efforts and noted that he and other local officials have been meeting with Coalition members to discuss the need for leadership to ensure that transportation mitigations conform to the community's long range vision.

- **NNMC update:** Ollie Oliveria reported that exterior panel installation on the main new medical buildings is nearing completion and that interior work will begin later this year. The Intrepid TBI Center is also moving quickly, with exterior panel installation now under way. There are plans to build a new gym to replace the old one, which will be torn down to make way for new Fisher Houses.
- **MDOT Update:** Andy Scott said the first meeting of MDOT's Bethesda BRAC Coordinating Committee was a good start for the various agencies to work together on technical matters, and bring a multimodal approach to dealing with Bethesda BRAC transportation issues. On the SHA Intersections Improvement project, he noted that the agencies will coordinate on master plan and land use issues to develop a plan that conforms to available funding. He also hopes to have in place by September an outline of long-range projects requiring inter-agency planning, such as pedestrian and bike paths and the WMATA comprehensive bus study. He also noted that the General Assembly's Joint BRAC Committee, which includes Senator Rich Madaleno and Delegate Bill Bronrott, has reconvened and is focusing on BRAC impacts.
- **STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION:** Christine Lavoie and Jialin Tian gave a presentation on modifications to the SHA Intersections Improvement program that had been unveiled at a Public Workshop last April 2. Modifications are based on extensive public input and follow-up meetings with neighborhood groups, and the need to conform construction plans to budget reductions. In several instances, roadway widening will be replaced with redesignation of turn lanes and movements. The entire project is still a "work in progress" and SHA continues to study modifications. The following list of specific modifications is not complete, and proposals that were proffered on April 2 that are not included here may still be under consideration. Supplemental documentation from SHA will be added to this meeting summary.
 - **MD 187 (Old Georgetown Road at Cedar Lane/Oakmont Avenue):** Proposed widening of Oakmont Avenue is no longer being considered; Plans for bike path improvements along the east side of MD187 and the south side of Cedar Lane will proceed; The curb radius at all four corners of the intersection will be reduced to calm traffic; A storm water management pond on NIH grounds will be relocated to a less forested site.
 - **MD 355 (Rockville Pike) at Cedar Lane:** There will be improvements to the bike path on the east side of MD 355 south of Cedar Lane. The curb radius at all four corners of the intersection will be reduced to calm traffic. Widening of 355 north of Cedar Lane is still under consideration, pending funding.
 - **MD 355 (Rockville Pike) at Jones Bridge Road/Center Drive:** The southbound turnoff onto Woodmont Avenue will be reduced to calm traffic; There will be less widening of the northbound right turn lane at Glenbrook Village onto Jones Bridge Road, and SHA will work with Glenbrook Village to improve pedestrian access and landscaping along MD 355.

- **MD 185 (Connecticut Avenue) at Jones Bridge Road/Kensington Parkway:**
The so-called “Right Turn to Nowhere” along JBR has been eliminated; reduced widening of eastbound JBR west of MD 185 (at Howard Hughes Medical Institute). There was extensive discussion of plans for MD 185 north of Jones Bridge Road – while the proposed taking of five homes on the east side of MD 185 near the Beltway is still on the table, consideration is being given to converting most of the existing traffic median to a reversible peak-hour lane. There are also access issues for side streets on the west side of MD 185. Using a reversible lane would negate the need to take homes in order to widen MD 185. However, there are safety issues related to reversible lanes that must be evaluated.

It was noted that while these scaled back changes will surely reduce the cost estimate that stood at \$215 million in April, the total cost of the project clearly will exceed the current available budget of approximately \$45 million, or \$30 million counting deferrals. SHA intends to have further dialogue with the BRAC Committee and community groups to derive a plan, with concurrence of MC-DOT and local officials that conforms to available funding.

- **PARK AND PLANNING STAFF PRESENTATION ON LONG-RANGE VISION:**
John Carter and Larry Cole of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) led a presentation and discussion of long-range planning, and how plans to address BRAC-related transportation issues can conform to the community’s greater vision for livability. The presentation is attached to this meeting summary and can be accessed at:
http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/bic-mncppc_longrangepresentation-071409.pdf

The presentation, “Master Plans and Urban Design,” provided an overview of various Master Plans in Montgomery County along the MD 355 corridor. It focused on the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan, the BRAC intersections and Metro station access, architectural and streetscaping design concepts that promote mobility, pedestrian access and livability, and recommendations for future planning. Generally, John Carter noted that planning should give weight to pedestrian access, mass transit, alternative movements such as paths and tunnels, along with vehicular movement. Speaking generally, he cautioned that compromises that might be harmful to long-range vision, once implemented, are very difficult and costly to undo. John promised that Park & Planning staff will continue to monitor BRAC planning and noted that the SHA intersection proposals will be reviewed for comment by the Planning Board under Mandatory Referral.

- **John Carman reminded the Committee to submit comments to Phil on the draft letter to County Executive Leggett that was discussed earlier in the evening.**

- **John Carman solicited audience comments.** Concern was expressed about a perceived lack of coordination among the various federal, state and local agencies involved with BRAC-related matters.
- **The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m. The Committee agreed to cancel the August meeting, so the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 15, 2009, 7:30 p.m., at the BCC Regional Services Center.**

Committee members in attendance, July 14, 2009:

Phil Alperson, County BRAC Coordinator
 John Carman, Committee Chairman
 Larry Cole, Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission
 Chuck Floyd
 Ilaya Hopkins, East Bethesda Citizens Assn.
 Ginanne Italiano, Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce
 Janet Maalouf, Maplewood Citizens Association
 Seth Maiman, Western Montgomery Citizens Advisory Board
 Andy Scott, MDOT
 Paul Thaler, Locust Hill Citizens Association
 Ron Wilson for Dan Wheeland, NIH

Ex-officio:

Councilmember Roger Berliner
 Delegate Bill Bronrott
 Jahantab Siddiqui (Sen. Barbara Mikulski)
 Ken Reichard (Sen. Ben Cardin)
 Joan Kleinman (Rep. Chris Van Hollen)
 Miti Figueredo (Council Member Roger Berliner)
 Jeff Miller, NNMCTransportation Program Manager
 David “Ollie” Oliveria, NNMCTransportation Program Manager
 Capt. Daniel Zinder, Deputy Commander NNMCTransportation Program Manager

Other attendees

Clark Bottner, Shirley Contracting
 Gerald Cichy, Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)
 Pat Coccaro, Chevy Chase Park
 Dennis Coleman, NIH
 Nelson Galeano,
 Kathy Hochman, Chevy Chase Park
 Richard Hoyer, Councilmember Duchy Trachtenberg
 Bret Hadzimichalis, SHA
 Susan Hinton, NIH
 Jennifer Hughes, Office of County Executive Ike Leggett

Greco Humes, Chevy Chase Valley
Harold Johnson, Chevy Chase Park
Tracey Johnstone, ACT
Juvonnie Kinchen-Schneider, NNMC
Christine Lavoie, SHA
Hal & Ann M (sp?), Chevy Chase Park
Barbara & John Magistro, Chevy Chase Park
Eric Marabello, SHA
Marilyn Mazuzan, Town of Oakmont
Avice Meehan, Howard Hughes Medical Institute
Stu Nibley, Chevy Chase Park
Susan Peterson, NIH
Ken Strickland, Chevy Chase Valley Citizens Association
Ann Thompson, Chevy Chase Park
Jialin Tian, SHA
Andrew Ujifusa, Gazette Newspapers
John Wetterau, WRAMC
Julie Woepke, Maryland DBED Office of Military Affairs
Nkosi Yearwood, M-NCPPC